

Orig in KFK Action 543

For Remarks by DCL to NSC re NSC Action 543
26 November 1952

NOTES

1. Senior Staff ducked my chief recommendation.
2. Summary Eval. showed inadequacy of machinery but by no means isolated example.
3. We will defend and retaliate, hence only realistic evaluations are those of Net Capabilities
Examples - Soviet Air Defense Estimate
abandoned because no hypothesis as to attacks.
- Soviet overrunning Europe - waste of time if we ignore NATO forces and courses of action.
4. Pres. & NSC need full picture—our side and Soviet—and shouldn't and can't do the work of integrating two separate estimates.
5. Must study how this can best be done.
6. No preconceived notions — e.g., war plans can be safeguarded by furnishing several assumptions or hypotheses.
7. Full resources of government—civilian and military, intelligence people and planners must collaborate if we are to determine real nature and extent of threat to Nation.

File NSC
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20 November 1952

REMARKS FOR NSC MEETING:

The Senior Staff Memorandum makes no recommendation on the action proposed in the final paragraph of my letter. I have copies here for your consideration and would like to say a word about it.

The so-called summary evaluation is, to me, dramatic but by no means isolated evidence of the lack of adequate machinery within our government to produce estimates of any real value to those responsible for making national policy.

Neither we nor our principal allies are going to sit with our hands folded if Russia launches an attack against us here or abroad. We shall defend ourselves and presumably retaliate. The Kremlin knows this and plans accordingly. How, therefore, can we do otherwise than evaluate threats to our country as the Soviet's Net Capability to do us harm?

It does not seem to be possible, under present arrangements, to come up with such evaluations. For example, we have tried to estimate Russia's capability to defend itself against air attack, but the effort was futile because we were furnished not even an hypothesis as to the nature of the attacks they might have to meet.

Similarly, we estimate annually Russia's capability of overrunning Western Europe. A few years ago when Europe lay defenseless we could be satisfied with a "raw" capability—that is assuming no opposition. Today such an estimate that ignores the NATO forces in being and the possible alternative defensive courses open to them is not worth the paper it is written on.

The President and the NSC cannot make decisions with only half the picture before them, nor should they be required to do the extremely

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difficult work necessary to bring together two uncoordinated estimates—one for us and one for our enemy—into an integrated evaluation. This was tried for the paper now before you and failed dismally because the military did not produce the necessary information to make a balanced appraisal.

All I am asking is that a study be undertaken of how such a Commander's Estimate might be prepared. At this time, I am not recommending any particular machinery. I am merely insisting that the problem exists, must be studied and solved, and solved quickly.

Do not be misled into thinking that I want the Intelligence Community to take over the making of decisions and plans. Such is farthest from my thoughts. Nor do I wish to have our actual war plans disclosed throughout the intelligence services. A set of assumptions or conceivable courses of action for our forces would generally be adequate. I simply contend that the full resources of the government must be brought to bear on the task of weighing our strengths against our enemies' to the end that the real nature and extent of the dangers confronting us may be determined.

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